

## HCAHPS Mini Facts

03/15/2004

### HCAHPS INSTRUMENT

**What are the similarities and differences between HCAHPS and patient surveys that hospitals currently use?**

- The main differences have to do with the purpose of each survey. In short:
  - HCAHPS is designed to publicly report data on hospital care quality.
  - Vendor surveys are designed to report data internally to hospitals.
  - While there is some overlap in domains, HCAHPS and vendor surveys serve different purposes.

**What is the empirical basis for the items that are included in HCAHPS?**

- A CMS Pilot Test with a sample size of approximately 17,000 respondents.
- Extensive psychometric analyses, including internal consistency and hospital-level reliability, factor analysis, item response theory and construct validity.
- A review of the importance of the domains as reported by consumers in patient focus groups and the review of the literature.

**Why is it important to include more than just a few overall ratings of care questions on the HCAHPS survey?**

- Research with consumers clearly indicates that consumers want more detail about the specific components of care that are most important to them.

**How have public comments and pilot testing affected the HCAHPS initiative?**

- Modifications were made to the domains.
- Questions were revised to improve clarity, concision and focus.
- Implementation protocols were revised to simplify survey administration .
- We are currently reviewing comments generated by the most recent Federal Register notice.

### NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

**How will HCAHPS national implementation impact current hospital survey efforts?**

- Survey vendors and hospitals will be able to voluntarily administer HCAHPS by following survey, sampling and administration specifications.
- HCAHPS can be seen as a core survey to which hospitals and survey vendors will be able to add a broader set of questions (up to 30 items).
- HCAHPS is designed to gather the data necessary for comparative public reporting.

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**Can the HCAHPS survey be combined with existing hospital surveys?**

- Yes. To find out how HCAHPS can best be combined with existing questionnaires, AHRQ has formally invited hospitals and vendors to test the integration of the HCAHPS survey with current surveys and administration procedures.

**How will you handle trending issues?**

- When hospitals change vendors or surveys, vendors make adjustments and maintain trending data wherever possible.
- Trending is not a new issue and has been accomplished with the convergence of CAHPS and the NCQA instrument several years ago.
- More testing is currently underway that will answer a number of questions about the trending issue.

**How will concerns regarding the methodology for implementation be addressed?**

- CMS is currently reviewing public comments submitted as a result of the Federal Register notice and is addressing the key concerns raised.
- AHRQ and CMS will be working with AHA to convene a group of hospitals to get their input into issues surrounding implementation.

**How will the HCAHPS data be reported?**

- The HCAHPS data will be reported on CMS's [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) web site.
- AHRQ will conduct research with consumers to identify the best way to describe the data in a clear, simple and meaningful way.

**OTHER QUESTIONS**

**May I start using the instrument now?**

- Yes, however hospitals or their survey vendors must obtain permission from AHRQ prior to fielding the instrument.
- To get more information about this opportunity, please visit the CAHPS Survey Users Network web site at [www.cahps-sun.org](http://www.cahps-sun.org).